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Rapid Household Food Security Assessment

Effects of COVID-19 on the poor and food insecure



WFP Kyrgyzstan Country Office
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I. RATIONALE AND OBJECTIVES

The unprecedented crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic hit the Kyrgyz Republic in March 2020 leading to an extensive negative impact on food security, economic development and the population's well-being. The cumulative effects of the shocks faced by people and institutions in the country are still subject to a full evaluation while the need for tailored actions to address these effects is urgent.

The objective of the rapid assessment is to provide timely information on household food security and the degree of exposure felt by households to the shocks and stresses caused by the COVID-19 crisis. This will help to inform the response and recovery actions required by development partners and the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic in the short- and medium-term.

The assessment is built on WFP's planned programme monitoring survey in selected geographical areas and is adjusted to receive real-time data on the effects of the crisis on the population.

The survey covers the issues related to the use of coping strategies in response to shocks and stresses, the principle current and forecasted problems during the agricultural season, changes in households' purchasing power, availability of food and agricultural inputs, commodity prices, household expenditures and food consumption patterns.

The report is prepared by the WFP Country Office in the Kyrgyz Republic and provides the analysis of the results derived from the household survey and is complemented by secondary data sources available at the time of the report's preparation.

II. METHODOLOGY

The assessment is built on WFP's planned regular monitoring survey in its targeted districts in Osh, Jalalabad, Batken, Naryn and Talas provinces.¹ Given the the information needs in relation to COVID crises, the survey was adjusted and expanded in terms of the questions asked, the sampling (from 850 to 1,253 households) and the geography (Bishkek and Osh cities were added) in order to receive real-time data on the effects of the crisis on the population. The results provide a rapid snapshot of the situation in a large number of settlements in the country. Though the results do not represent a nationwide situation analysis, they can still identify the immediate needs to be addressed to ensure household food security and minimal purchasing power during crisis response and recovery period. The survey includes three types of households:

- WFP project beneficiaries of Food/Cash Assistance for Asset or Training² who represent the households living under the national poverty line,
- Randomly selected residents in the mentioned areas (non-beneficiaries, representing different income groups), and those receiving the
- Government's 'Ui bulogo komok' (UBK) assistance transfer, i.e. the poorest households (Bishkek and Osh).

Table 1. Household sampling

	Urban (large cities)	Urban (semi-urban) *	Rural **	Total
Total	403	251	599	1,253
Naryn		61	61	122
Talas		67	52	119
Osh		32	157	189
Jalalabad		47	180	227
Batken		44	149	193
Osh (city)***	179			177
Bishkek (city)***	224			224

***Urban** areas represent the following towns: Talas, Naryn, Uzgen, Tash-Komyr and Kyzyl-Kiya.

** **Rural** areas represent 87 AOs in 25 districts: Aksy, Ak Talaa, Ala buka, Alai, Aravan, At-bashy, Bazar Korgon, Bakai-Ata, Batken, Zhungal, Kadamjay, Kara Buura, Kara-Kulzha, Kara-Suu, Leilek, Manas, Nookat, Nooken, Suzak, Talas, Toguz Toro, Toktogul, Uzgen and Chong Alai.

The movement restrictions implemented as preventive measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19³, did not allow for a face-to-face data collection exercise, therefore the assessment was conducted using a remote data collection approach based on a phone survey during April 7-29, 2020. In total, more than 8,000 telephone contacts were utilized to conduct 1,253 household interviews. Respondents were selected randomly in across 5 provinces and 2 main cities of the country, including rural, semi-urban and urban settings⁴ representing the poor and those slightly above the poverty line. The response rate was 37 percent (out of 3,398 call attempts, 1,253 interviews were completed).

¹ Excluded provinces were Issyk-Kul and Chui, as WFP projects are not implemented in these areas and telephone contacts of potential respondents were not available for this survey.

² Households that have members who have participated in WFP projects in late 2019-early 2020. According to WFP's beneficiary selection criteria these households should live below the national poverty line, own no productive assets and a limited number of livestock.

³ The emergency situation was declared in March 2020 followed by the state of emergency resulting in the restriction of movement among the population and legal entities, including for data collection and research companies.

⁴ The use of telephone-based surveys has implications in terms of the planned and actual sample size per geographical clusters, because the actual response rate and number of telephone contacts per cluster affects the distribution of the sample. The distribution of urban and rural households in the sample (30 percent/70 percent) is close to the distribution in the selected provinces (24 percent/76 percent). Weights were applied to the results to reflect the actual distribution of the population between rural and urban areas and in the various provinces.

III. FINDINGS

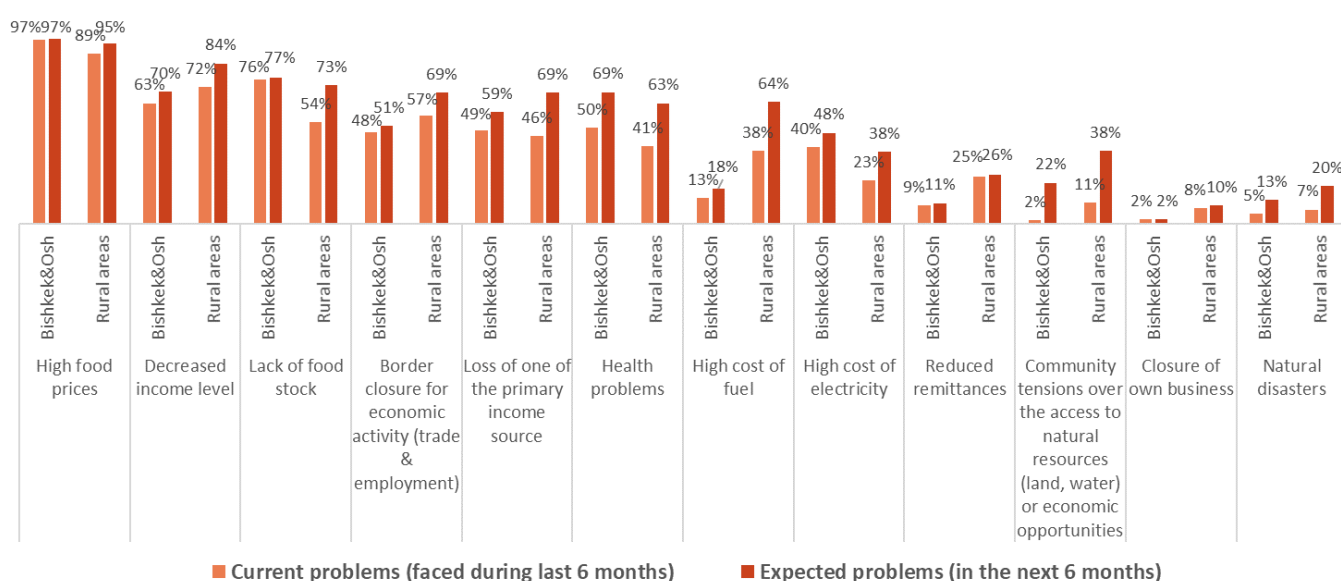
Household characteristics

1. The average household size was 6.2 (5 in urban areas and 6.4 in rural areas). Most of households were male-headed (76 percent) with a higher prevalence in rural areas (84 percent) and a lower prevalence in urban areas (65 percent), aged 49 on average.
2. Most of the households had children under 5 or primary school-aged children (6-11 years old): 71 percent of households had children under 5 years old (1.2 on average) and 68 percent of households had primary school-aged children (2.4 on average).
3. Households with pregnant or lactating women (27 percent) or with disabled or chronically ill household members (25 percent).

Shocks and stresses faced by households

4. The problems reported by households as a consequence of the COVID-19 outbreak were extensive (Figure 1). The problems mentioned in urban and rural areas have a slightly different order of importance, but the top three shocks in both areas are similar – **high food prices**, **lack of food stock** and **decrease in incomes**. Compared to a similar assessment in these target areas⁵ during the pre-COVID time (2018), high food prices and a decrease in income were problems for around 57 percent and 52 percent of households, respectively, while currently it is a vast majority of households that have reported these problems in the last six months.
5. Almost half have reported the loss or temporary **loss of one of the primary income sources** in the household and some have reported the closure of their own businesses in the last few months.
6. One-quarter has reported a **decrease in volume of remittances**, which is one of the primary income sources for many households, playing a significant role in preventing these households from falling into poverty.
7. It is concerning that 38 percent of households have a fear that **community tensions** over access to natural resources may be exacerbated as a result of the situation.
8. Every-fifth household expects **natural disasters** to affect their communities in rural and semi-urban areas, as their exposure to landslides, mudflows and other disasters is higher than in urban areas.

Figure 1. Current and expected problems reported by households

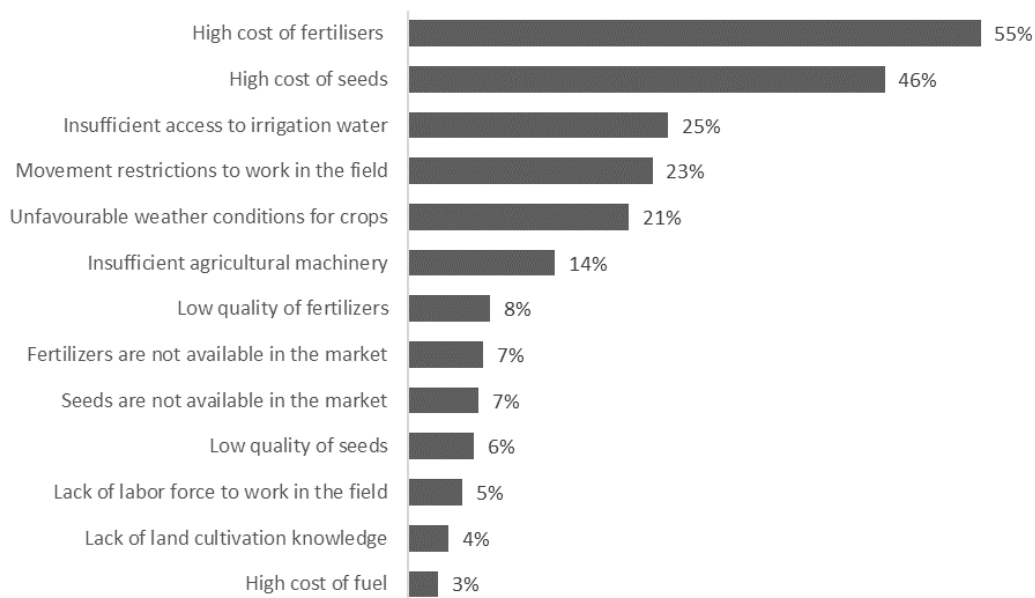


⁵ Food Security Outcome Monitoring, WFP, 2018

Agriculture

9. Households engaged in farming face a number of problems during the spring planting season. COVID-19-related consequences have exacerbated the already limited agricultural capacities of smallholder farmers and added new challenges limiting their economic capacities. Households engaged in farming were asked what problems they were facing with crop planting. The problems reported by smallholder farmers are listed in order of importance in Figure 2 below.

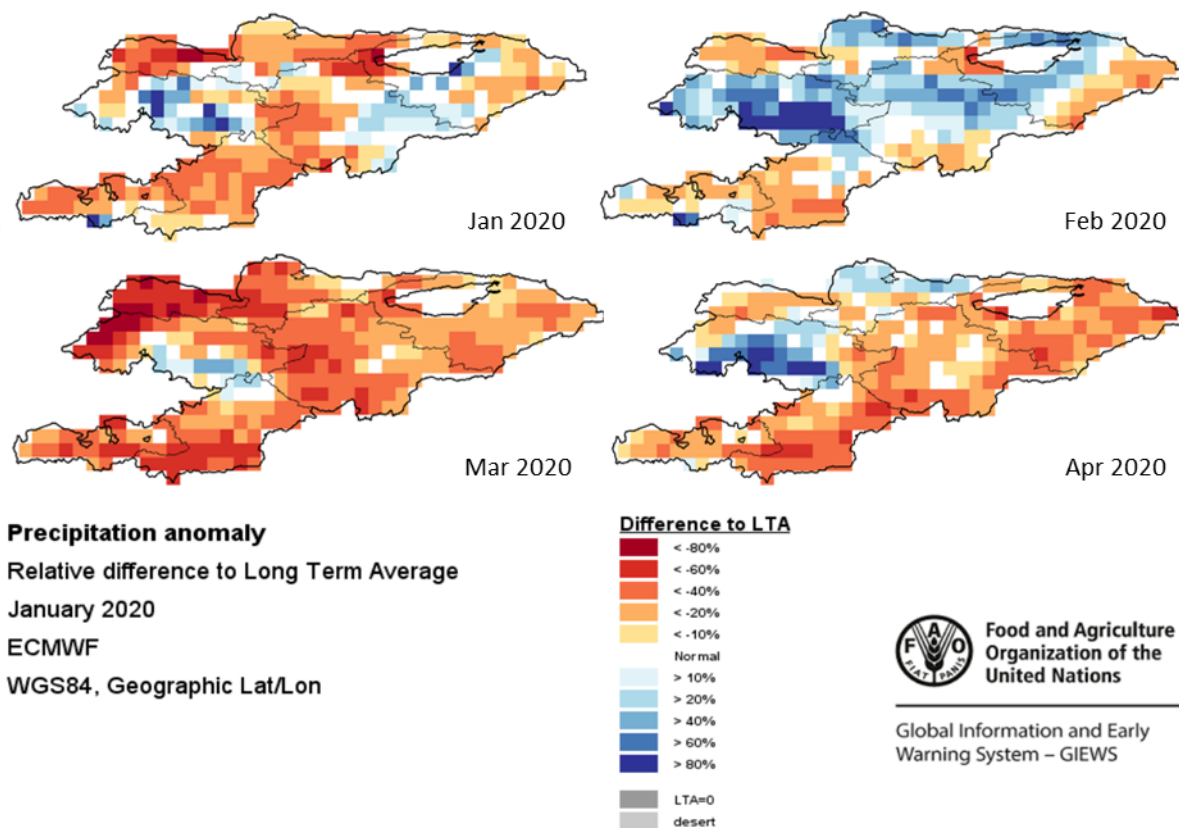
Figure 2. Problems in agriculture reported by farmers



10. The most critical problem for smallholder farmers was **economic access (high prices) to fertilizers and seeds**, while the actual availability of these items in the market was a less critical problem. The Government took measures to control fertilizer and seeds prices by adding it in the list of essential commodities for the population in line with food items, enabling it to regulate the prices by the Antimonopoly Agency and to prevent their price increases, however, despite these measures, the existing purchasing power of smallholder farmers was limited to allow for all essential agriculture expenditures.
11. **Access to irrigation water** has been a chronic problem for many farmers, as confirmed by a number of studies from the previous years and was confirmed to be an issue for every fourth household. Although the survey did not collect data on the reasons behind these problems, it can be assumed that a number of factors may have influenced poor access to irrigation. As physical movement restrictions were in place during the data collection, agricultural servicing (including irrigation servicing by local service providers) may have been reduced or stopped. Households also could have had the limited ability to exercise physical access to irrigation due to movement restrictions. This was a concern for almost one-quarter of farmers as they could not reach their fields to start the planting season. Another possible factor influencing insufficient access to irrigation may be linked to the annual increase in planting areas nationwide for some crops (wheat, barley and other crops), as reported by the Ministry of Agriculture. A lower amount of precipitation has been observed since the beginning of 2020 in comparison with to the long-term average, particularly in Chuy, Batken, Osh and Talas provinces (Figures 3-4).

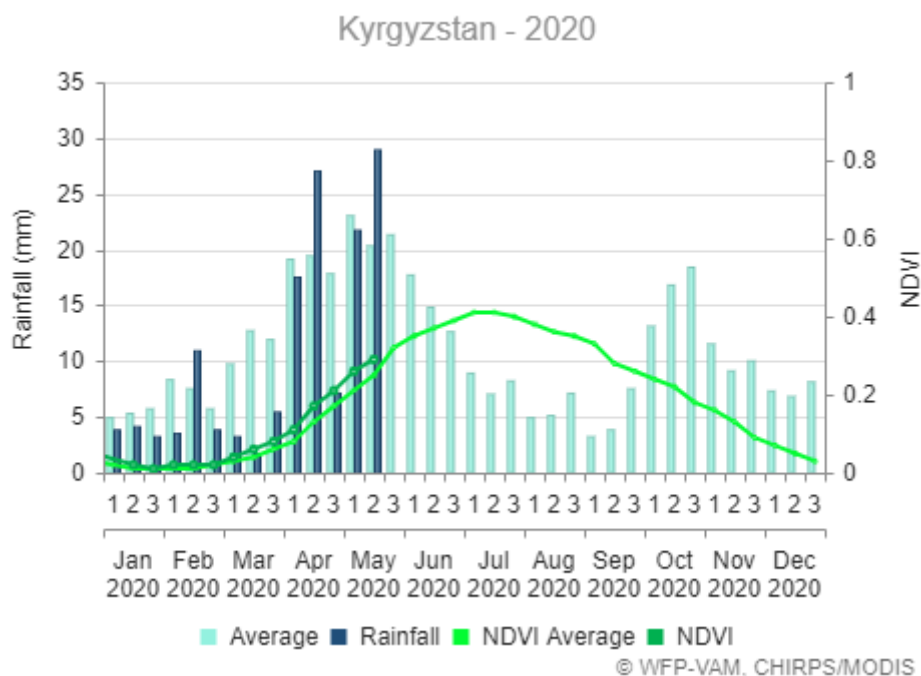
Figure 3. FAO's Estimated Precipitation Anomaly⁶

⁶ The map illustrates the difference between the current rainfall volume and the average level. Rainfall levels are compared with the Long-Term Average (LTA), which refers to the period 1989-2015. Warmer colours identify areas which have received lower-than-average rainfall, while colder colours are given to areas where precipitation has been above average: <http://www.fao.org/giews/earthobservation/country/index.jsp?lang=en&code=KGZ>



Disclaimer: The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of FAO concerning the legal status of any country, territory, area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers and boundaries.

Figure 4. WFP’s Seasonal Monitoring Tool

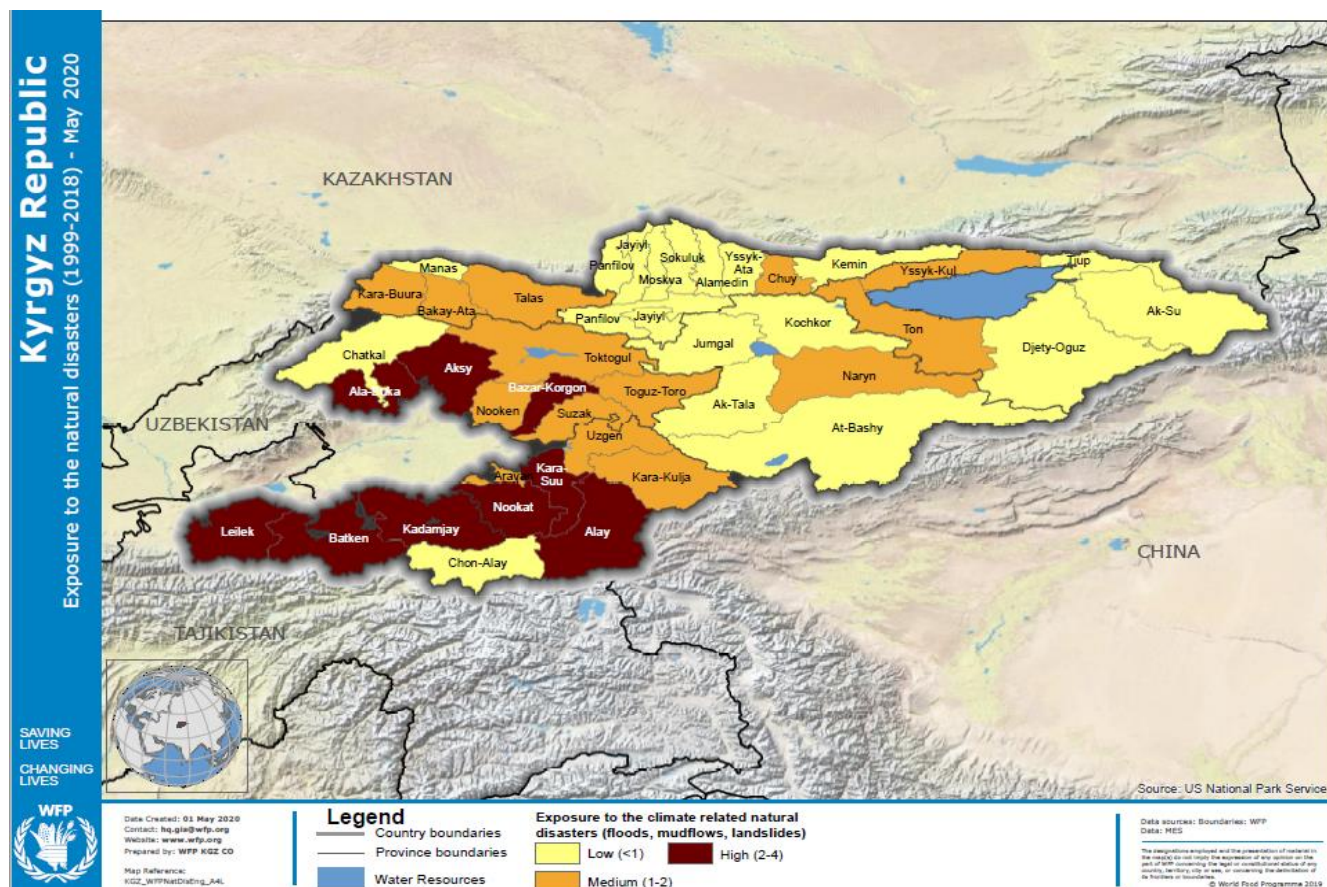


- Every-fifth farmer reported **unfavourable weather conditions** for agriculture as a problem they faced during the planting season. Spring frosts occurred in April which caused significant damage to fruit and vegetable planting. The three southern regions and the Chui valley have suffered the most. The total amount of damage exceeded 337.2 million som.⁷ Thus, natural disasters (Figure 1) and weather anomalies (Figure 2) during the planting season pose a significant risk to production,

⁷ MoAFIM’s report 14 May 2020, Development Partners’ Coordination Council: Agriculture, Rural Development, Food Security and Nutrition Working Group (DPCC ARDFSN WG) meeting

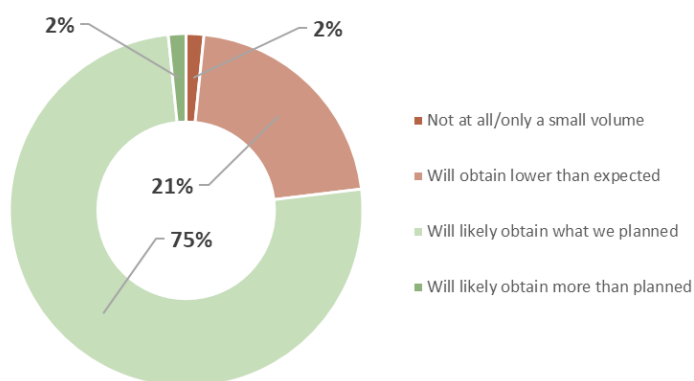
productivity and livelihoods, especially if agriculture is the main income source for households. As shown in the map below, many districts in the country and majority in the south historically are extremely prone to natural hazards, such as mudflows and landslides.

Map 1. Proneness to natural disasters (mudflows and landslides)



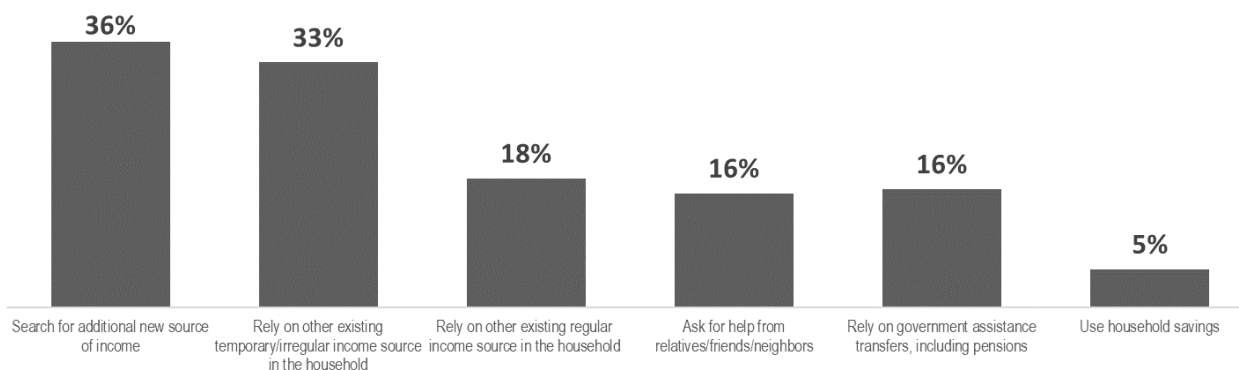
13. As a result of these shocks, one-fifth of farmers felt uncertainty regarding the expected harvest volumes and estimated lower harvest volumes during this agricultural season (Figure 5). With about 400,000 smallholders who produced about 90 percent of total agricultural output in the country, there was a risk that border closures, localized restrictions on movements and other related problems would negatively impact agricultural production, productivity and subsequently, incomes and consumption.

Figure 5. Perceptions on the expected harvest



14. If the worst case scenario with crop production occurs and households are not able to harvest the planned volume of agricultural products this season, more than one-third of farmers will be **in search of additional new income sources**, another third will **rely on existing (irregular) income sources**, while 16 percent will **rely on the help of relatives or government assistance** (Figure 6).

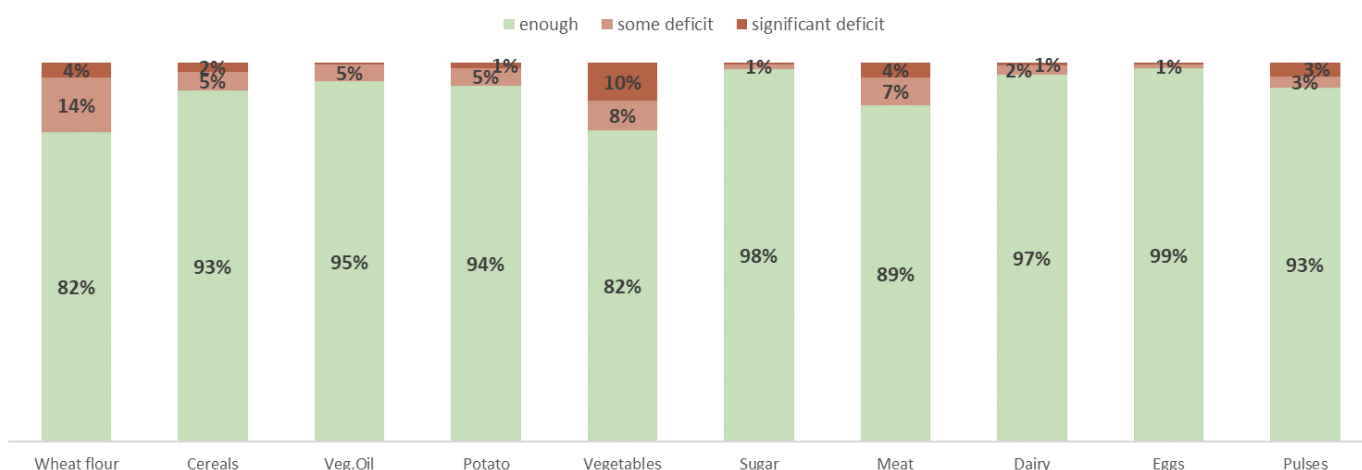
Figure 6. Expected coping mechanisms if harvest volumes are not obtained



Markets

15. **Majority of households assessed availability of food commodities in the nearest market as 'sufficient'.** This is likely a result of government interventions to ensure food availability in the markets throughout the country. Some localized shortages were reported for wheat flour, vegetables and meat in the rural areas of Ala-Buka, Suzak, Aksy, Toktogul, Kara-Suu and Batken districts. This was confirmed by the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Industries and Melioration (MoAFIM), that has been reporting shortages in some districts due to border closure and the transportation delays between provinces.

Figure 7. Perceived food availability in the nearest markets



16. Households were also asked about their subjective assessment of the level of food price changes compared to the same period last year. The increase in food prices as perceived by households was highest for wheat flour, potatoes and vegetables. The highest rate of increases for wheat flour price was reported in Talas while the highest rates of increases in potato prices were observed in Bishkek and Osh cities.

Table 2. Perceived changes in food prices (percent)

	Wheat flour	Cereals	Vegetable Oil	Potato	Vegetables	Sugar	Meat	Dairy	Eggs	Pulses
Overall	30.00	15.00	15.00	30.00	25.00	10.00	5.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Urban	30.00	15.00	15.00	30.00	25.00	5.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Rural	30.00	10.00	15.00	30.00	25.00	10.00	9.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Bishkek city	30.00	20.00	15.00	50.00	30.00	5.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Osh city	30.00	20.00	18.13	50.00	30.00	8.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	20.00
Jalalabad	30.00	10.00	10.00	30.00	25.00	10.00	6.50	0.00	0.00	0.00

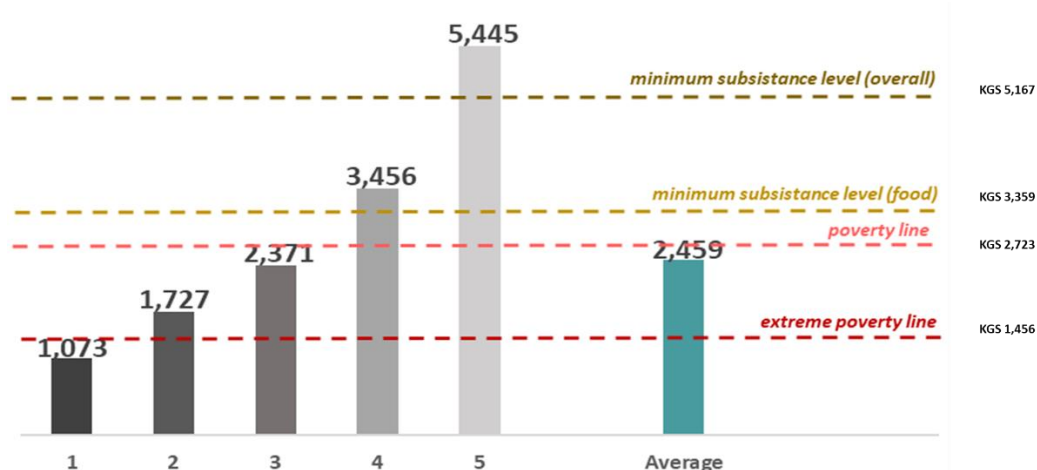
Naryn	30.00	19.59	17.79	20.00	25.00	19.50	17.79	0.00	0.00	0.00
Batken	30.00	10.00	10.00	20.00	20.00	5.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Osh	30.00	11.90	20.00	30.00	24.00	10.00	5.95	0.00	0.00	0.00
Talas	36.44	10.00	14.50	30.00	30.00	20.00	25.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

- Although the change in prices was perception-based, this reflects the trend of the official national price monitoring data. National price monitoring as of 29 April 2020 revealed that wheat flour increased by 13 percent and 13 percent; potatoes by 48 percent and 54 percent; and sugar by 7 percent and 14 percent compared to March and February 2020, respectively. Compared to the same period last year (April 2019), prices for wheat flour and potatoes were 28 percent and 115 percent higher, respectively, while the price for sugar remained stable. The increase in sugar prices has been within the normal seasonal price fluctuations.
- Since the Kyrgyz Republic heavily depends on the imports of staple food commodities - wheat, sugar and vegetable oil from neighbouring countries - the import restriction measures may have significant impacts on food security. The Government is conducting regular price monitoring in 18 markets around the country and after the COVID-19 outbreak, the Government introduced additional measures to monitor and stabilize food markets across the country including the enforcement of price ceilings through the Antimonopoly Agency for basic food items.

Economic capacity

- Households were classified into five quintiles (each representing 20 percent of the distribution) based on the per capita income levels where the first quintile represents the poorest households while the fifth quintile represents the most well-off households. Figure 8 presents the average per capita income levels per each income quintile.
- The **average per capita income** (measured through food and non-food expenditures, including factoring in monetized amounts of consumption from their own production) was **KGS 2,459 (USD 32)**. Compared to a similar assessment in 2018, this income is lower than when the average monthly per capita income was KGS 3,820 (more than 30 percent lower in absolute terms).

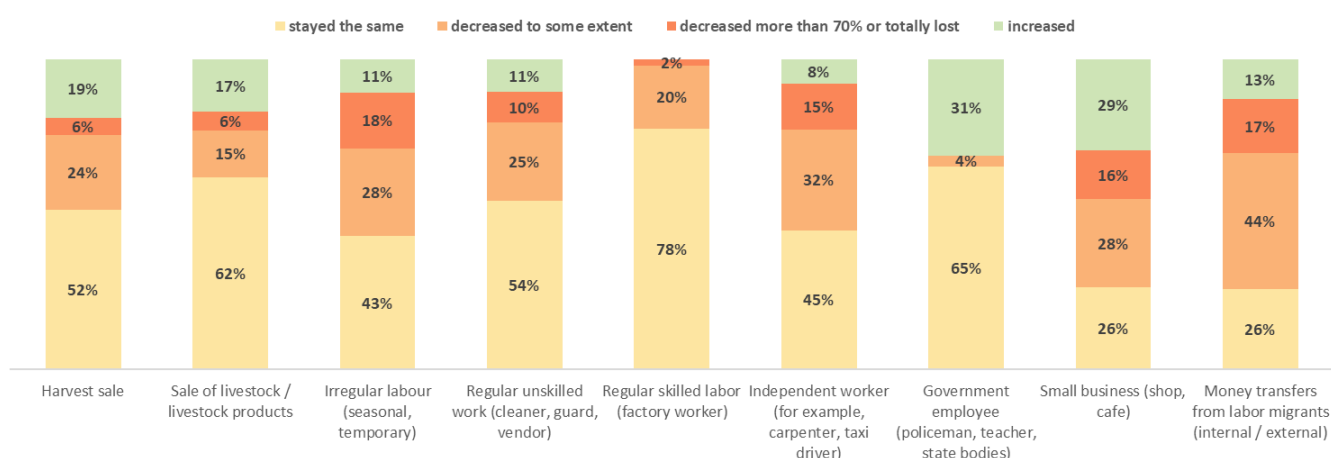
Figure 8. Average monthly per capita income (median), KGS/by income quintiles



- As the national poverty line accounts for KGS 2,723 (USD 34) per person per month, the average income among sampled households indicate that these households represent those who are around the poverty line: 56 percent of sampled households were classified as 'poor' (with expenditures below the national poverty line). Households of the fifth quintile in this assessment represent those who were living only 5 percent above the minimum subsistence level of the government. Most likely these households represent the 'new poor' as they risk falling into poverty as a result of the economic shocks.
- Households were asked how their income levels have changed compared to the same period last year. Figure 9 outlines the results for each income source. The most secure households in terms of

those experiencing a decrease in income were government employees, while the rest of the households were affected differently due to their income sources. The highest prevalence among households of a decrease in income levels were those relying on **irregular labour, employment as independent workers** and **money transfers from migrants**.

Figure 9. Change in income levels as reported by households



23. Among households relying on **irregular labour** (seasonal, temporary) as one of their income sources, 28 percent reported a reduction to some extent in income level from this economic activity and 18 percent reported that their income decreased significantly (more than 70 percent) or was totally lost. Among households relying on **independent employment** (for example, taxi drivers) as one of their household income sources, one-third reported that their income decreased to some extent and 15 percent reported a significant decrease (more than 70 percent) or the loss of this income source. According to government estimations⁸, around 1.8 million people were affected by the loss of an income source.
24. Forty-four percent of households relying on **remittances** reported that the volume of these transfers decreased compared to the same period last year and 17 percent reported that it decreased significantly (more than 70 percent) or were totally lost. This reflects the official reports⁹ that every fifth Kyrgyzstani citizen working in Russia lost their job as a result of the crisis. Despite a decrease or a loss of income among migrant workers, only a few have returned to the country according to the assessment results (reported by 3 percent of remittance-dependent households). Most of these migrant returnees do not have plans for employment in the country and many of them will be trying to again migrate abroad for economic opportunities.
25. Twenty-eight percent of respondents reported that their household members were **looking for an additional or alternative job or source of income** in the last three months. In comparison, according to the food security assessment in the same target areas in 2019¹⁰, 20 percent of households reported looking for additional income sources in the last 12 months.

External food security assistance

26. In the last three months, more than 44 percent of households have received some assistance in the form of food or non-food (soap washing supplies), mainly from the government (government assistance was reported by 30 percent of households while 14 percent of households have received assistance from non-government providers). The most frequently reported assistance was wheat flour and wheat products, vegetable oil and sugar. Among the less frequently reported commodities received were rice, potatoes, peas, vegetables (carrot and onion), tea, and hygiene materials (soap and antiseptics).

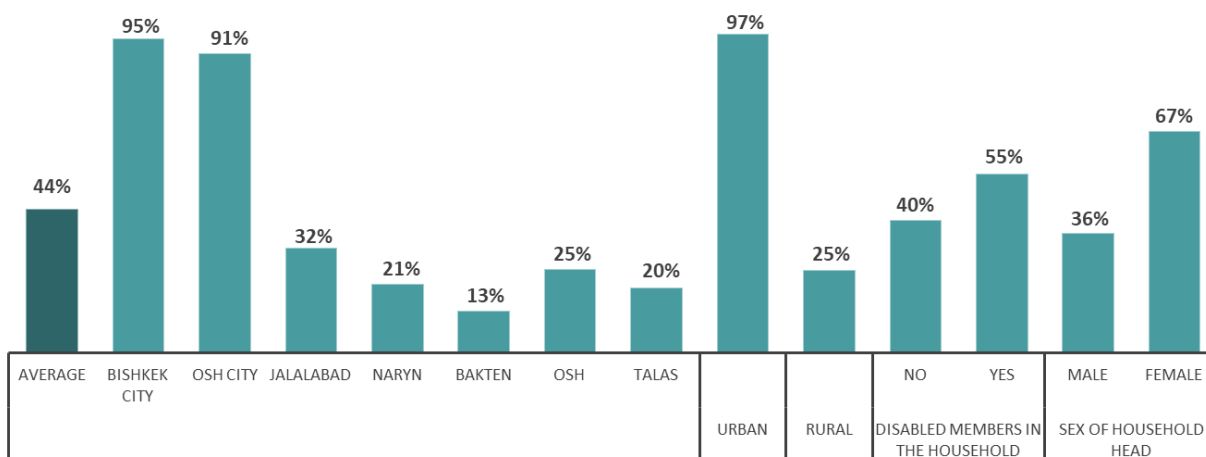
⁸ April 1, 2020. <http://kabar.kg/news/covid-19-po-strane-naschityvaetsia-okolo-1-8-mln-grazhdan-ostavshikhsia-bez-zarplaty-minsotcrazvitiia/>

⁹ https://24.kg/obschestvo/151291_kajdiyiy_pyatyyiy_kyrgyzstanets_vrossii_ostalsya_bez_raboty_iz-za_koronavirusa/

¹⁰ Food Security Outcome Monitoring, WFP, 2019

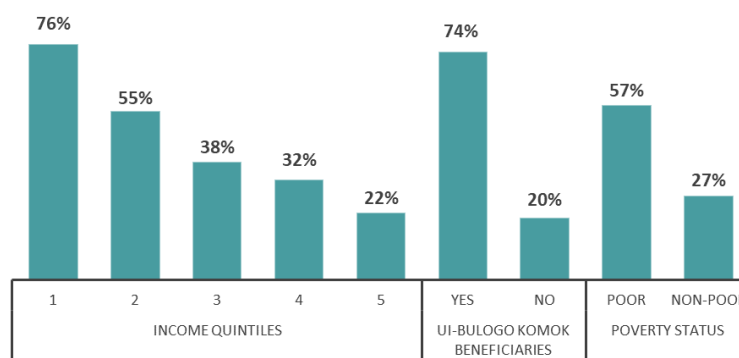
27. The highest share of households that reported receiving any external assistance were in Bishkek and Osh cities. (All sampled households in these areas were the Government’s ‘Ui-bulogo komok’ poverty assistance beneficiaries and therefore were included in the lists of vulnerable households that were in need of additional support). The lowest share of households that reported receiving any assistance was in Batken (Figure 10).

Figure 10. Reported external assistance provided to households (by geographic and demographic characteristics)



28. Among the households of the first income quintile, 76 percent reported receiving some form of external assistance in the last three months (Figure 11). More than half of households with disabled or chronically ill members received some assistance in the last three months. External assistance was given to more among female-headed households compared to male-headed households.

Figure 11. Reported external assistance provided to the households (by vulnerability status)



29. According to official data reported by the Government, as of 22 May¹¹, more than 500,000 people received food and non-food assistance from the Government or other donors (Table 3). This data was compared to the overall number of people living under the national poverty line¹² in each province. The comparison shows that the coverage of the poor was highest in Bishkek and Osh cities and lowest in Batken and Talas provinces (Figure 12).

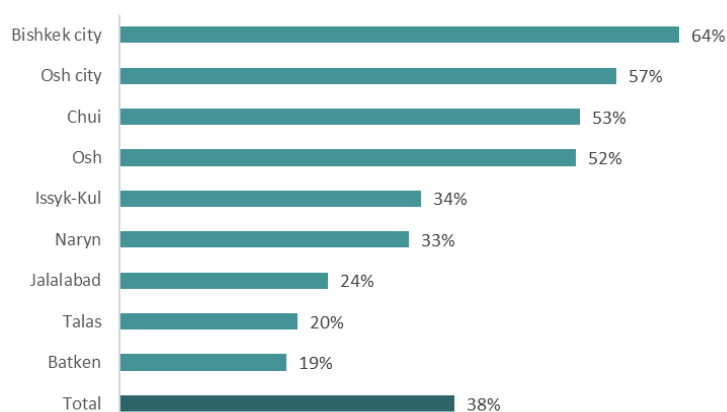
¹¹ <http://kg.akipress.org/news:1620208?from=mportal&place=last>

¹² Data derived from the National Statistics Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic, 2018

Table 3. Official number of people who received any assistance vs. number of the poor

	Assistance beneficiaries	Total number of the poor
Bishkek city	101 254	158 523
Osh city	60 245	106 217
Jalalabad	93 232	391 232
Naryn	29 022	87 826
Batken	33 724	177 355
Osh	103 157	198 309
Talas	1 809	58 181
Chui	6 972	146 534
Issyk-Kul	36 238	105 444
Total	545 653	1 429 621

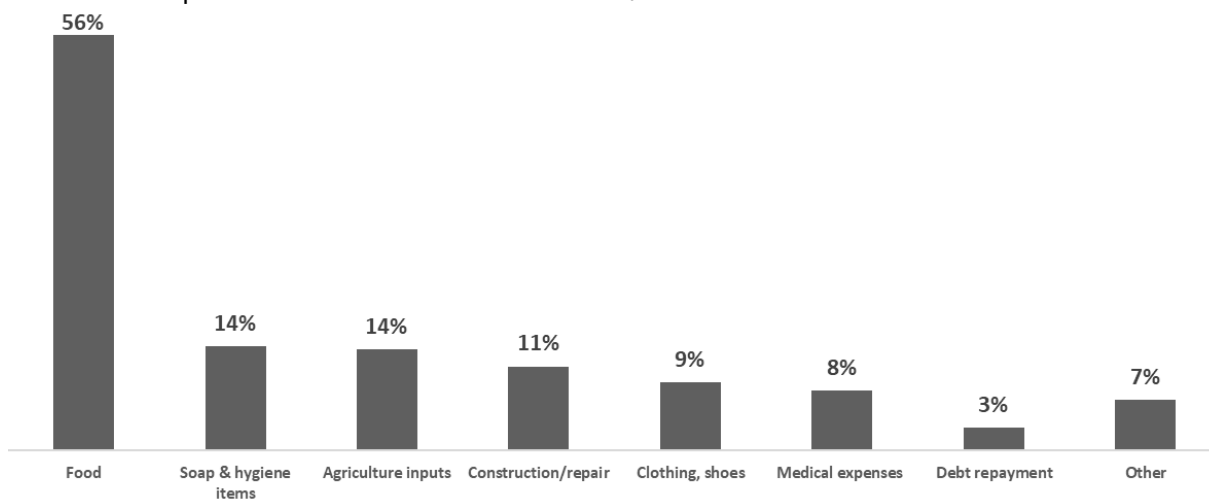
Figure 12. Share of poor households covered with some form of assistance



Indebtedness

30. 45 percent of households have reported taking new loans or credit lines over the last six months to cover existing economic gaps. On average, these households need to repay KGS 8,600 (USD 109) in the coming months (the nearest payment). This money was primarily utilized to purchase food and other essential items for household use as shown in Figure 13.

Figure 13. Main expenditures covered with new loans/credit



31. The ability of households to repay these loans/credits may be at risk as currency inflation may have a negative impact on return rates. The capacity and rate of return of credits and loans may experience a downward drop. The inflation of the Kyrgyz currency may also negatively impact those people who took out loans in US dollars, as in 2019 the share of loans in US dollars was 35 percent of the total credit portfolio.¹³ The Kyrgyz som has depreciated by 13 percent against the US dollar since the beginning of March 2020.
32. On average households have a 4-week stock of wheat flour and a 2- to 3-week stock of vegetable oil and potatoes (among the first income quintile households, these stocks are enough on average for 7-days less), while cereals, vegetables and sugar are mostly available for about a 7-10 day period of household consumption. Households also have about a 7-10-day stock of soap, hygiene items and the necessary medicines.

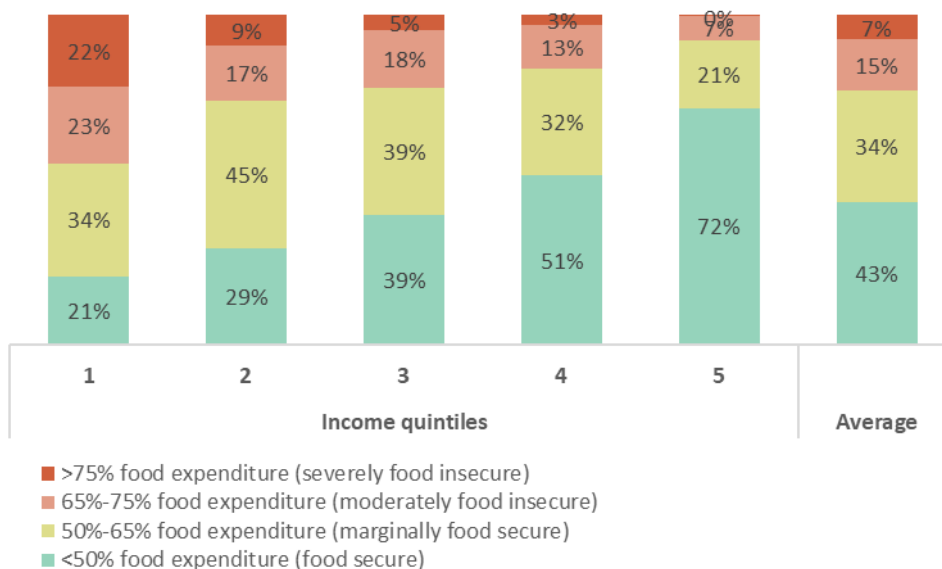
¹³ <https://economist.kg/2020/01/21/dollarizaciya-kreditov-v-bankah-kr-snizilas-do-35-depozitov-do-38/>

33. However, in the case that incomes decrease or will be lost in the near future, 74 percent of households estimate that their **savings will not be sufficient to cover even a 1-month period** to allow for all essential expenditures (food, non-food needs and services).

Household expenditures

34. The poorest households have spent 63 percent or more of their budget on food, which points at marginal food security or moderate food insecurity.¹⁴ Almost half of the poorest spent more than 65 percent of their budget on food and every-fifth spent more than 75 percent of their budget on food (Figure 14), which points at moderate or severe food insecurity.

Figure 14. Share of household expenditures of the total food budget

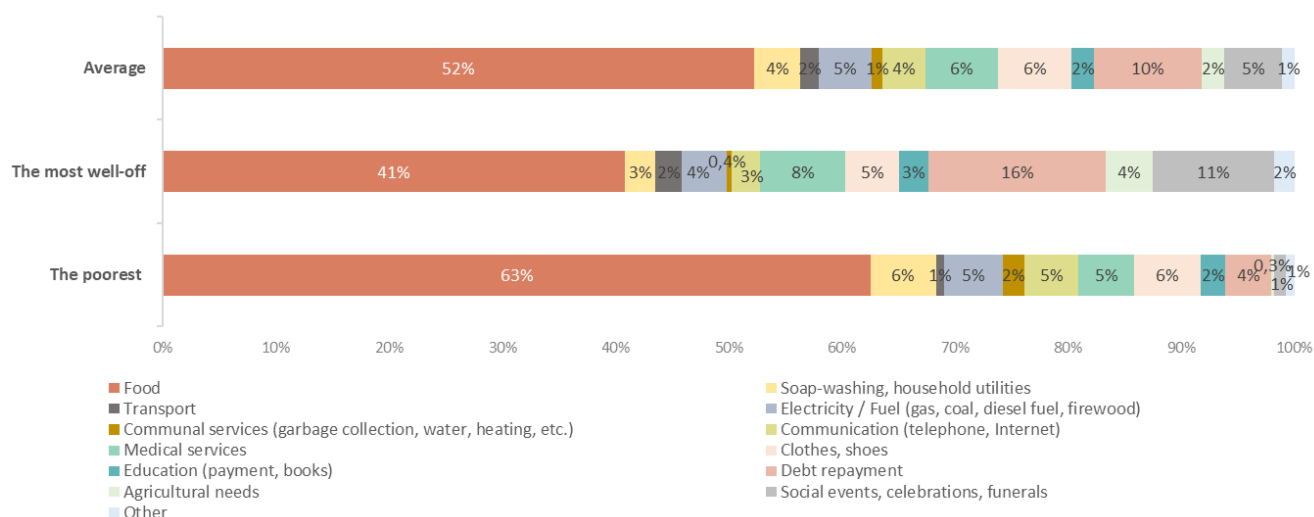


35. On average, households had spent **KGS 1,213 (USD 15)** per person per month to meet their food needs (KGS 616 (USD 8) among the poorest and KGS 2,301 (USD 28) among the most well-off). On average, this constitutes only **36 percent of the official Minimum Subsistence Level** (food component) of KGS 3,359 (USD 43).

36. The poorest were forced to sacrifice other essential household expenditures to meet their food consumption needs (Figure 15) as they had only KGS 457 (USD 6) per person per month available to meet all of their necessary non-food and services needs.

Figure 15. Share of expenditures, by type, out of the total household budget

¹⁴ In WFP's standard classification, if households spend less than 50 percent of their budget on food, they are considered food secure. If they spend 50-65 percent, they are considered marginally food secure; if they spend 65 percent-75 percent they are considered moderately food insecure; and if they spend more than 75 percent on food, they are considered severely food insecure.



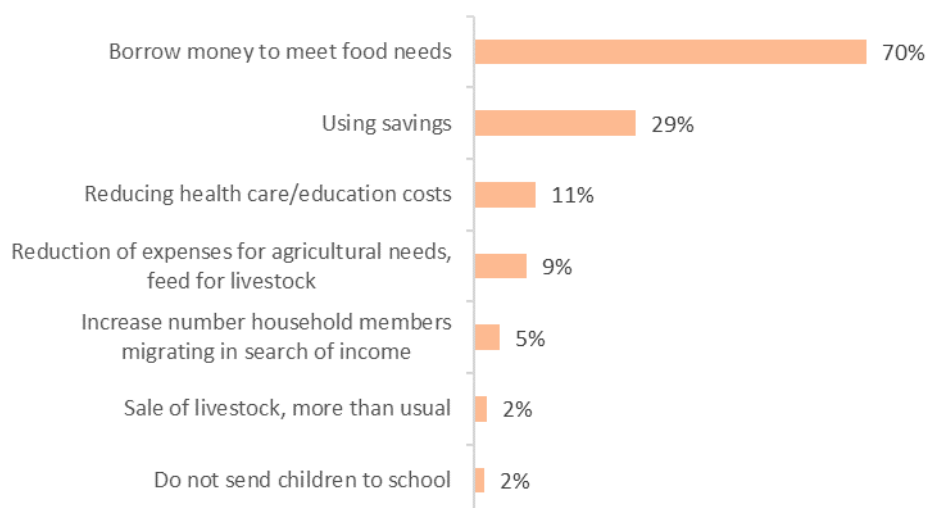
37. Data suggests that indebtedness was higher among more well-off households (fifth income quintile). In this survey, they represent the households living around the minimum subsistence level compared to the poorest, as the latter are in extreme economic need and have the minimum capacity to repay debts. On average, households spent 10 percent of their budget to repay these debts within 30 days, which may point at their marginal ability to sustain their economic capacities by only adopting various coping strategies as described in the next section.
38. At the same time, expenditures for social events and ceremonies were the third largest expenditure among more well-off households (after food and debt repayment), which suggests that these households, though not representing the poorest, were marginally able to meet their expenditure needs. These households did not invest sufficiently in the types of spending which could have had a more productive effect on their economic capacity and decrease their likelihood of falling into poverty.

Coping mechanisms

39. In order to cope with their reduced economic capacity and shortages of food or money to buy food, households reported applying different coping strategies related to asset depletion or changes in regular food consumption practices.
40. In the last 30 days, the majority of households (70 percent) reported that they had to borrow money to meet their food needs. In the pre-COVID assessment (2019) in the same target areas¹⁵ only 37 percent reported applying this coping mechanism.
41. Among other frequent asset depletion strategies were using savings (almost every third household) and reducing essential non-food expenditures like health and education or agriculture (every tenth household).
42. In 2019, 58 percent of households applied some form of asset depletion coping strategies, compared to 82 percent during this study. This indicates the reduced ability of households to deal with shocks, the reduction of current and future productivity and human capital formation and jeopardizing future livelihoods.

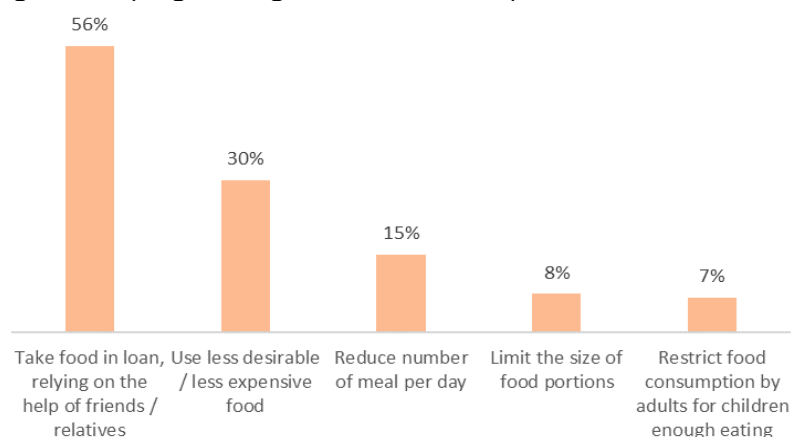
Figure 16. Use of asset depletion coping strategies during the last 30 days

¹⁵ Food Security Outcome Monitoring, WFP, 2019



43. The analysis shows that the use of asset depletion coping strategies among poor and non-poor was not significantly different (86 percent of the poorest and 75 percent of the most well-off have applied some of these strategies). This suggests that households that live above the national poverty line but around the minimum subsistence level are at risk of becoming the 'new poor' if they are unable to recover from the current crisis.
44. To cope with food consumption shortfalls in the short-term period, households had to find ways to fill in the consumption gaps or sacrifice their normal consumption practices (Figure 17).

Figure 17. Use of negative coping strategies (food consumption-related) in the last seven days



45. The most commonly used food consumption-related coping strategies were **taking food items on loan or relying on the help of others** and **using less desirable in type and quality or less expensive food items**.
46. More than half of households reported taking food items on loan or relying on help from others (compared to 27 percent in the pre-COVID period)¹⁶ and 30 percent reported using less expensive food items (compared to 20 percent in the pre-COVID period). These types of coping strategies were adopted by households to maintain their access to food in the short-term.
47. Some households were also limiting their food intake to cope with food and money shortages. These strategies were used to maintain access to food during the crisis and, if applied regularly in the medium or long-term, could pose a risk to the health and nutrition situation, especially for women and children.

Food consumption

48. The assessment revealed a deterioration in consumption patterns compared to the pre-COVID data. **Protein-rich foods** were consumed to a reduced extent: 76 percent have consumed it daily and

¹⁶ Ibid

20 percent have consumed it at least once a week while in 2019¹⁷, almost all households (94 percent) have consumed these food items daily. Protein plays a key role in growth and is crucial for the prevention of wasting as well as stunting, which takes place largely within the first 1000 days of life.

49. Only 28 percent consumed **haemoglobin iron-rich foods** daily and 47 percent consumed it at least once a week. In comparison in 2019¹⁸, 59 percent of households consumed these food items on a daily basis (a two-time reduction). One-quarter of households (and every second household among the first income quintile) did not have any **haemoglobin iron-rich foods** in their diet during the last seven days. Iron deficiency, one of the main causes of anaemia, affects a significant share of children and women and may cause long-term impacts on the productivity and quality of life, if these types of food items are not consumed sufficiently.
50. The utilization of food or asset depletion related coping strategies (borrowing food, relying on help from others, limiting portion size, reducing the number of meals per day or limiting adult consumption for small children to eat) may have partially enabled households to ensure minimally sufficient diets in terms of frequency per week and their diversity.

¹⁷ Ibid

¹⁸ Ibid

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The analysis confirmed a deterioration in transitory food insecurity and higher economic vulnerability of the poor and those slightly above the poverty line after the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic in the country. Households relying on irregular labour, employment as independent workers and money transfers from migrants have been affected the most by a decrease in income or the loss of income sources.
2. Economic access to food items and agriculture inputs (fertilizers, seeds) was a concern as the increased prices for these commodities affected the poor and marginally food secure who were applying negative asset depletion and food consumption-related coping strategies to sustain their food security and economic capacities. This included extensive indebtedness in the last months and deteriorated food consumption patterns, posing risks to their productivity and nutrition status in the future.
3. The majority of the poorest and poor received some food security assistance in the last three months (February-April 2020) from the Government and other donors, however further targeted assistance to improve and maintain food security in both urban and rural areas is required to minimize the impact of the crisis to the vulnerable groups.
4. There is a risk of further deterioration of economic capacities of households, especially if the agriculture season is negatively impacted. Natural hazards and unfavourable climatic conditions pose another significant risk to the already deteriorated livelihood sources of smallholder farmers who are the key driver of domestic production output.

Annex 1. Household questionnaire

a) Questionnaire No.	_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _	b) Date	_ _ _ _ _ / _ _ _ _ _ 2020	c) Type of settlement (1=Village 2=City)	_ _ _
d) Province	e) District		f) Sub-district (AO)	g) Village / Town	
h) Respondent sex/age	_ _ 1. M 2. F	_ _ _ _ years		i) Interviewer's name	
j) Respondent name			k) Phone number	_ _ _ _ _ _ _ - _ _ _ _ _ _ _ - _ _ _ _ _ _ _	

I – GENERAL

1.1	How many people live in your household at the moment?	_ _	1.5	Are there any persons with disabilities? 0=No 1=Yes	_ _
1.2	Number of children under the age of 5 years	_ _	1.6	Who is making decisions in your household (head of household)? 1 = Male 2 = Female	_ _
1.3	Number of primary-school-aged children aged 6-11 years	_ _			
1.4	Are there any pregnant/lactating women? 0=No 1= Yes	_ _	1.7	Age of household head (years)	_ _

II – MAIN PROBLEMS FACED BY YOUR HOUSEHOLD

Which main problems did your household face / expecting to face in the near future? 1 = Yes / 0 = No / 99 = N/A											
		past 6 months		nearest 6 months							
		_	_	_	_	_	_				
2.1	High food prices					2.8	Health problems				
2.2	High cost of fuel					2.9	Reduced remittances				
2.3	High cost of electricity					2.10	Lack of food stock				
2.4	Loss of primary income source					2.11	Natural disasters				
2.5	Border closure for economic activity (trade & employment)	_	_	2.12	Community tensions over the access to natural resources (land, water) or economic opportunities	_	_				
2.6	Closure of own business					2.13	Other (indicate) _____	_	_		
2.7	Decreased income level							_	_		

III – INCOME SOURCES AND ECONOMIC SITUATION

3.1	How satisfied are you with the available income sources in your household? 1=Very unsatisfied; 2=Somewhat unsatisfied; 3=Neither satisfied nor unsatisfied; 4=Somewhat satisfied; 5=Very satisfied; 99=refuse					_ _
3.2	Over the past 3 months, have your household members looked for an additional/alternative job/source of income? 1 = Yes / 0 = No / 2 = Don't know; 99 = refuse to answer					_ _
	Which of the following income sources/government social assistance you currently have in your household?	0=No; 1=Yes; 99=refuse		How did income levels change compared to the same period of last year? (percent of decrease/increase: -xx percent, 0, +xx percent)		
3.3	Harvest sale	_	_	_	_	_
3.4	Sale of livestock / livestock products	_	_	_	_	_
3.5	Irregular labour (seasonal, temporary)	_	_	_	_	_
3.6	Regular unskilled work (cleaner, guard, vendor)	_	_	_	_	_
3.7	Regular skilled labour (factory worker)	_	_	_	_	_
3.8	Independent worker (for example, carpenter, taxi driver)	_	_	_	_	_
3.9	Government employee (policeman, teacher, state bodies)	_	_	_	_	_
3.10	Small business (shop, cafe)	_	_	_	_	_
3.11	Large business	_	_	_	_	_
3.12	Pension for elderly	_	_	_	_	_
3.13	Monthly Benefits for Poor Families with children (MBPF)	_	_	_	_	_
3.14	Monthly social benefit (MSB): disability, veterans, etc.	_	_	_	_	_
4.15	Newborn benefit "Suiunchu"	_	_	_	_	_
3.16	Public Works (through the state employment service)	_	_	_	_	_
3.17	Money transfers from labour migrants (internal / external)	_	_	_	_	_
3.18	Other (specify) _____	_	_	_	_	_

3.19	During the last 3 months, did you receive any food, non-food or cash assistance to your household? 0=No; 1=Yes; 99=refuse					_ _
3.20	If yes, from whom	_ _	3.22	What did you receive and how much	_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _	

3.33	Do you have any of migrated household members who returned during the last 6 months? 1= Yes / 0= No					_ _
3.34	What was the reason for return? 1. Jobs are less available 2. Personal plans/family issues, etc.; 3. Income amount received has reduced; 4. Loss of employment; 5. Difficulties related to legislative mechanisms 5. Other (specify)					_ _
3.35	What are their plans for employment in the country? 1. Engage in agricultural activities; 2. Look for irregular non-agricultural wage labour (e.g. seasonal, temporary); 3. Get employed for regular wage labour; 4. Independent work (e.g. carpenter, taxi driver); 5. Petty trade; 6. Small business; 7. No plans for employment; 8. Other (specify)					_ _

3.36	Did you take any new loans or credit over the last 6 months? 1= Yes / 0= No		_ _ → If No, go to Section IV			
3.37	What is the current amount of this debt or credit you have to pay back? KGS)		_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _			
What are the main expenditures that you have covered with this money? 1= Yes / 0= No						
3.38	Food	_ _	3.44	Education (stationery, textbooks, fee)	_ _	_ _

3.39	Soap & hygiene items			3.45	Debt repayment		
3.40	Fuel (gas, coal, wood, etc.)			3.46	Celebrations/social events		
3.41	Rent (house, land, etc.)			3.47	Agricultural inputs		
3.42	Medical expenses (check-ups, drugs, hospital fee)			3.48	Constructions/house repairs		
3.43	Clothing, shoes			3.49	Other		

3.50	In case your household has lost (or would lose) any income sources or have (or would have) a decreased level of incomes currently, for what period of time would your household's savings amount would be sufficient to cover basic food, non-food needs and essential services? (indicate in months or '0' if less than one month)		
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IV – AGRICULTURE

4.0	Are your household members engaged in crop planting this agricultural season (for own consumption or for sale)? 0 = No / 1 = Yes (If 'No', go to Section 5)					
If yes, what major problems associated with crop planting you are encountering currently? 1 = Yes / 0 = No / 2 = Don't know						
4.1	Lack of labour force to work in the field		4.8	High cost of seeds		
4.2	Limited possibility to working in the field due to movement restrictions		4.9	Seeds are not available in the market		
4.3	Insufficient agricultural machinery		4.10	Low quality of seeds		
4.4	Insufficient access to irrigation water		4.11	Lack of available/accessible loans for agriculture		
4.5	High cost of fertilizers		4.12	Unfavourable weather conditions for crops		
4.6	Fertilizers are not available in the market		4.13	Lack of land cultivation knowledge		
4.7	Low quality of fertilizers		4.14	Other (specify)		

4.15	Would you be able to obtain the expected amount of harvest this year? 1. Not at all/only a small volume 2. Will be able to obtain lower than expected 3. Will likely obtain what we planned 4. Will likely obtain more than planned					
4.16	If you will not obtain the expected (required) volume of harvest this year, what do you plan to do?					
4.17	Rely on other existing regular income source in the household		4.23	Ask for help from relatives/friends/neighbours		
4.18	Rely on other existing temporary/irregular income source in the household		4.24	Send household members for migration for economic opportunities		
4.19	Search for additional new source of income		4.25	Nothing (no plans)		
4.20	Rely on government assistance transfers, including pensions		4.26	Other		
4.22	Use household savings					

V- FOOD ACCESS AND CONSUMPTION

5.1 Is there enough food items available in the nearest market in your community? 1=enough; 2=some deficit; 3=significant deficit; 4=Don't know									
Wheat flour	Cereals	Veg.Oil	Potato	Vegetables	Sugar	Meat	Dairy	Eggs	Pulses

5.2 How did the food prices change in the nearest market in your community during the last month? (estimate the rough proportion)									
Wheat flour	Cereals	Veg.Oil	Potato	Vegetables	Sugar	Meat	Dairy	Eggs	Pulses

5.3 For how many days of consumption do you have the following food stocks? (in days)									
Wheat flour	Cereals	Veg.Oil	Potato	Vegetables	Sugar	Meat	Dairy	Eggs	Pulses

5.4	For how many days of consumption do you have the following non-food stocks? (in days)	Soap	Hygiene items	Medicines

How many days in the last 7 days did your household consume these products? (0-7) <i>DO NOT take into account food consumed in a very small amount (less than a tablespoon per person). Specify only one code for each food item</i>									
5.5	Bread, pastry, macaroni, corn, rice			5.14	Meat (meat of livestock, poultry)				
5.6	Potato			5.15	Organ meat (liver, kidney, etc.)				
5.7	Beans, lentils, peas			5.16	Eggs				
5.8	Nuts			5.17	Fish				
5.9	Green vegetables (cucumbers, cabbage, greens)			5.18	Dairy products (yoghurt, cheese, milk, ayran)				
5.10	Orange vegetables (carrots, pumpkins)			5.19	Vegetable oil, butter, fat				
5.11	Other vegetables (tomatoes, onions, radishes, etc.)			5.20	Sugar, honey, jams, ice creams, other sweets				
5.12	Orange fruits (oranges, apricots, etc.)			5.21	Tea, coffee				
5.13	Other fruits (apples, pears, bananas, etc.)								

VI – COPING STRATEGIES AND SUPPORT

During the last week if your household faced shortages of food or money to get food, during how many days a week your household had to use the following actions to mitigate the effects of lack of food or money to buy food: Specify the number of days: (0-7)									
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6.1	Use less desirable / less expensive food			6.4	Limit the size of food portions		
6.2	Take food in loan, relying on the help of friends / relatives			6.5	Restrict food consumption by adults for children enough eating		
6.3	Reduce number of meal per day						

Over the last 30 days, if your household faced shortages of food or money to get food, did any of the members had to use the following actions to mitigate the consequences of the shortage of products / money: 1 = No (no need to apply this coping mechanism), 2 = No (already used this action), 3 = Yes (applied), 4 = Action not applicable									
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6.6	Increase number household members migrating in search of income?			6.11	Sale of livestock, more than usual?		
6.7	Borrow money to meet food needs?			6.12	Reducing health care/education costs?		
6.8	Reduction of expenses for agricultural needs, feed for livestock?			6.13	Sale of a house or land?		

6.9	Using savings?		6.14	Sale of the last cattle?	
6.10	Sale of productive assets or means of transport (agricultural equipment, sewing machine, car, etc.)?		6.15	Do not send children to school?	

VII - HOUSEHOLD EXPENDITURES

Did you purchase any of the following items during the last 30 days for domestic consumption? If not, enter '0' and go to the next product. If yes, how much money (in cash or on credit) did you spend for each type of product?				During the last 30 days did your household consume the following foods without purchasing them? If not, go to 4.13. If yes, what was the amount of consumed food items?			
<i>Product type</i>		<i>A - In cash or credit (som)</i>		<i>C - (Kg/ litre / pcs)</i>			
7.1	Bread and flour products			7.13			kg
7.2	Rice			7.14			kg
7.3	Potatoes			7.15			kg
7.4	Vegetables			7.16			kg
7.5	Fruit			7.17			kg
7.6	Meat (meat of cattle, poultry)			7.18			kg
7.7	Eggs			7.19			pcs
7.8	Dairy			7.20			lit
7.9	Vegetable oil, butter			7.22		lit. (veg. oil)	kg (butter)
7.10	Sugar, honey, jam			7.23			kg
7.11	Coffee Tea			7.24			gr
7.25	Other products not consumed at home						som

How much money did you spend to purchase the following items for your household's use? <i>If not purchased, specify '0'</i>							
<i>Last 30 days</i>		som		<i>Last 6 months</i>		som	
7.26	Soap-washing, household utilities			7.32	Clothes, shoes		
7.27	Transport			7.33	Education (payment, books)		
7.28	Electricity / Fuel (gas, coal, diesel fuel, firewood)			7.34	Debt repayment		
7.29	Communal services (garbage collection, water, heating, etc.)			7.35	Agricultural needs		
7.30	Communication (telephone, Internet)			7.36	Social events, celebrations, funerals		
7.31	Medical services			7.37	Other (specify)		